



Former victim of domestic abuse wins United Way Regina President's Award

By Carrie-May Siggins Metro Regina April 25, 2012

Pat Cassell-Ogilvie was among the winners at the United Way Annual Tribute Luncheon on Wednesday, accepting the President's Award for outstanding contributions to the community.

"I'm very honored and very humbled because I know there are so many people who help out in the community," Cassell-Ogilvie told Metro in an interview afterwards.

Cassell-Ogilvie arrived in Regina at the age of 12 after fleeing an abusive father. She lived with three different friends, their families opening up their homes to her for extended stays, as she completed her schooling.

At 16, Cassell-Ogilvie met and married a man who resembled her father in one terrifying way.

She said that after years of abuse at the hands of her new husband, she finally left with her three children when the oldest just six. She then took in her niece and set about raising four children as a single mom.

In order to make ends meet, Cassell-Ogilvie took on a variety of jobs, eventually gaining 20 years experience in the property management business.

In the 1980s she met her future husband Don Ogilvie, a farmer, and in 1998, she teamed up with her daughter Tracy to open En Vogue Spa.

A highly successful businesswoman, Cassell-Ogilvie has contributed significantly to the community. She's been a longstanding volunteer and Board Chair of SOFIA House, a second-stage shelter for women fleeing domestic violence, and has hosted and organized a number of fundraising events for the agency.

"Part of the reason I joined SOFIA House was to educate people in the community.. that there are reasons why these women are where they are," says Cassell-Ogilvie. "I was one of them myself. Relationships like that take all your power away from you. Organizations like SOFIA House help women to gain their power back."

In 2009, Cassell-Ogilvie faced another dramatic challenge when she was diagnosed with mouth cancer. "The doctors brought my family to my bedside a few times to say goodbye," says Cassell-Ogilvie.

"In the end, it had a positive impact on my family. I learned how to let them take care of me and it brought us closer together."

For Cassell-Ogilvie, a positive attitude has been a very important factor in her life. "You have a choice," she says. "You can let things get you down and impact where you are and who you are, or you can decide to take things as a challenge and do the things some people might not think you can do. Part of my life has been about showing people that I can do it despite what I might be facing

